

Cuppa in a capsule

QUALITY COFFEE CAN COME FROM A HOME ESPRESSO MACHINE, WRITES **NOLA CRAIG**

I have never understood why people buy expensive espresso coffee machines for home use.

It seems you have to spend quite a lot to get a reasonable coffee. My stinginess prompts an equation that with an appliance ranging in price from \$500 to more than \$2000, that's a lot of exceptional coffees you can enjoy at a quality cafe. Not that I am an avid connoisseur of the bean, but when offered a coffee in a domestic situation I am happier to opt for the consistent flavour of the instant variety rather than take a lucky dip on a widely varied taste from a domestic espresso machine.

That all changed when I was in France and offered a homemade coffee from a well-known pod coffee machine. Shock! I try to tell myself the handsome movie star who usually promotes this machine had nothing to do with my decision, but I found

this coffee was the closest to a barista's coffee I had experienced. I really liked it.

However, being locked into one brand of coffee doesn't agree with me, since we produce some great coffee in our region.

So how pleased was I to find a local person has the distributorship of a French DIY coffee Capsul'in? My Coffee Capsules is owned by long-time local food and wine enthusiasts Ramzi and Alana Halabi, who some years ago were known for their wonderful collections of wines at their Fiorelli's Wine Shop in Grafton St and later on James St. An innovative concept of a plastic capsule with an auto-adhesive aluminium lid that fits into the brewing chamber of any brand of capsule coffee machine, the Capsul'in offers great freedom of choice of coffee beans to brew – fair trade, organic, single origin and more.



Alana and Ramzi Halabi of My Coffee Capsules.

Picture: TOM LEE

Tableland roaster and seller, Rob Webber of Coffee Works says using the capsule "is a great way of allowing people who own a capsule coffee machine to sample all the wonderful and diverse types of coffee there are on offer".

Local grower and roaster, Jason Jaques is impressed. "I think it will give a real boost to the sales of Australian-grown coffee," he

says. "It adds another device to the list of machines that people can use at home to make coffee. Previously, we were unable to sell to people who preferred the capsule system and now we can tap into that market."

■ CAPSUL'IN CAPSULES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE COFFEE WORKS IN SPENCE ST OR VISIT: WWW.MYCOFFEECAPSULE.COM

SNACKS

■ Vote for El Mundo Tapas Bar in the People's Choice of Telstra Business Award, visit: www.telstrabusinessawards.com

■ Ferntree Little Chefs are teaming up with for The Good Guys for the Cairns Jamie Oliver Food Revolution Day today at 10am at The Good Guys store, Mulgrave Rd. If you're a foodie, meet others who love food to come together to share information, talents and resources; to pass on their knowledge and highlight the world's food issues. Visit: www.foodrevolutionday.com

Quaffing Carnivale

LONGEST LUNCH HAS SET THE BAR HIGH, WRITES **BJ FOLEY**

The Port Douglas Carnivale has kicked off and there is so much happening. Food and wine lovers are well and truly catered for this year, and I for one can't wait to get to some of the newer events.

One that has really grabbed my attention is the Sea Temple Masterclass today. A day of learning cooking skills, plus at the end of the class you get to eat what you've cooked, matched with wines.

The Sheraton Mirage Longest Lunch organisers raised the bar this year with the level of drinks being served at the event. Treasury Wine Estates once again came on board to bring in a couple of interesting wines for those lucky enough to attend. If the line-up of wines from the Longest Lunch was anything to go by, as featured below, then this year's Carnivale will be a cracker.

DISTANT COUSINS SAUVIGNON BLANC

A wine label that has only been around for about six months or so, but has been doing tremendous trade. It was made by Nikolai St George, who is also the senior winemaker behind such labels as Fickle Mistress pinot noir and the hugely popular Squealing Pig sauvignon blanc. Distant Cousins is a Marlborough sav, the leading wine category in Australia today. It has tropical and citrus fruits, shows a little mineral gravelly-ness and finishes with tangy lime and lemon.

CAPE SCHANCK PINOT GRIGIO 2010

One of the many brilliant pinot grigios made by the team at T'Gallant, at the cool-climate Mornington Peninsula, southeast of Melbourne. The coastal influence on the vineyard means there is a decent summer humidity, yet low wine stress, plenty of rain and sunshine. This means you get grapes that have great fruit flavours and

are high in natural acidity, two important factors when making a white wine that is crisp and dry. This wine is a bright pale straw colour with pear and citrus aromas. On the tongue the influence of that maritime environment becomes apparent, creating a dry and crisp wine that shows a little red apple and white peach. It is at home equally well with food as it is on its own.

FICKLE MISTRESS PINOT NOIR

Senior winemaker Nikolai St George says this is "a mouthful of complex texture and regional characteristics, culminating in an expressive savoury finish". That's probably not talking it up too much. His team has done another great job here, sourcing the fruit from the Central Otago region in New Zealand's South Island (the cold one), and coming up with great labelling on the bottle too. This isn't like most pinots out there. It's more of a softer, lighter style, a touch of smokiness, spice and sweet berry fruit and a savoury finish. A very interesting wine.

COLD STREAM HILLS RESERVE SHIRAZ

Established in 1985 by James and Suzanne Halliday, this Yarra Valley winery has become one of the standout vineyards to visit in the area. Their Reserve shiraz is made from low-yielding hillside vineyards found in the lower areas of the Yarra Valley. This wine was first made in 1998 and originally released as Coldstream Hills Limited Release shiraz, and in 2006 it was included as part of the Reserve program. This 2007 shiraz is a deadset little ripper that has got texture and that full-on ripeness of fruit happening. This is one of those wines you'll be trying to find in the bottle shop once you've had a taste of it.



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Fickle Mistress pinot noir

RECIPE: SONIA BERNYK
IMAGE: BEN DEARNLEY

recipe

PUMPKIN & CHICKPEA SOUP

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS • COOKING 30 MINS

WHAT YOU NEED

- 2 tbs olive oil
- 1 leek, halved lengthways, thinly sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 3 tsp chopped fresh oregano
- 2 tsp Mexican chilli powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1L (4 cups) vegetable stock
- 1kg butternut pumpkin, peeled and chopped
- 400g can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 40g (½ cup) coarsely grated cheddar or Mexican-style cheese
- Sour cream, to serve
- Chopped fresh coriander, to serve

WHAT TO DO

- 1 Heat oil in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Cook the leek, stirring, for 5 minutes or until soft. Add the garlic, oregano, chilli powder and cumin. Cook, stirring, for 30 seconds or until aromatic.
- 2 Add the stock, pumpkin, chickpeas and cinnamon. Bring to the boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until the pumpkin is tender. Remove and discard cinnamon.
- 3 Blend the pumpkin mixture until smooth. Top with cheese and sour cream and sprinkle with coriander.



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